the Catholic Church on interfaith dialogue over a three-decade period, it is a marvelous research compendium. Therefore, it is a most welcomed and indispensable addition to all mission and theological libraries.

James H. Kroeger, M.M.


In this work, the last of his life, Fr. Paul Quay set out to pull together his vision of the Christian heritage which he feels has been the capital which the West has been spending, and so diminishing, over these many years. As such it is an encyclopedic volume, far-ranging in its coverage of the topics that often are treated in fundamental theology: revelation, the Church, Christian life, original sin, and Trinitarian life. The topic on Christian life is a good place to place this work, as Fr. Quay at the time of his death a few years ago was hailed in the press of the United States as largely responsible for the theological underpinning of the Right to Life Movement there. In this sense, one could well call the present essay a 20th century American Jesuit’s vision of the meaning of Catholic life.

But there is a deeper sense. Fr. Quay has written out his personal theological syntheses under the rubric of “recapitulation.” This is where his title comes from and the work he presents is a theory of how all Christian life takes its meaning from the call for all those born through Baptism into Christian life to follow the path first taken by Christ. As he ‘recapitulated’ the Covenant experience of mankind with YHWH, undoing, as it were, the failure of Adam through His own fidelity to His Father, so too are all followers of Christ to ‘recapitulate’ the Covenant experience in their own lives. As can be seen, this treatise could also, therefore, be described as an ‘apologia’ for the study of the Old Testament in contemporary catechesis and religious instruction.

Fr. Quay is not unknown to local scene. Some years ago the Cardinal Bea Institute at the Loyola House of Studies produced a local printing of an earlier work of Fr. Quay: The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality. This earlier work has proven useful in the ongoing critical work of fundamental catechesis in the Philippine Church, and I feel the present work will also make its influence felt in the same area.
Some examples:

If it be conceded that the Father does love us, as Father, we have still to ask: "In what ways or in what manner does He love us?" For, clearly, within the Trinity, neither the gift of the divine essence nor the mutual glorification of Father and Son, inasmuch as belonging to the Persons Themselves, includes us. . . . Because He loves us in Jesus, the Father loves us, I would argue, as He loves Jesus . . . This means, therefore, that the Father will love us, first of all, freely and, then also, exigently, forming us to share fully in the mission of Jesus as the Christ, to labor and to suffer for the good of His Church (p. 80).

I take this particular example to show what I might call the 'physicist-mind' of Fr. Paul the theologian. It is this physicist mentality — the questioning or problem-solving approach to the Real — that gives this work both its thoroughness and its comprehensiveness. The author is obviously someone who respects the real data — in this case the Bible, and as he emphasizes, all of the Bible — and the tradition of the Church. This reality he has probed well. The quote cited above comes from the fourth chapter of some thirty pages with 69 footnotes of supporting material. We have here then a serious 'researcher' who has turned his critical acumen to the task of exploring what it means to be a post-modern Christian.

It should be particularly noted that we see here an emphasis on the Church Fathers in a way not seen in recent times and also a call to bring into play the spirit of exegesis found so often among the Fathers: the sensus plenior. It is this return to a Biblical tradition that Fr. Quay holds out as a key to the capturing again of the exemplary life of Christ. For us he has shown the way of recapitulation, and as we recapitulate the life He first led, each according to the Father’s will, we find our meaning in life.

Perhaps this is a good place to end this review — where it began. If Fr. Paul Quay spent a good portion of his life defending the life in the womb, this last work of his is no less a defense. But now it is a sweeping vision of what we are all called to do and to be. It is a call to live an answer to 'God’s problem':

How best bring a creature that must somehow share in its own creation, since truly like God, to do so in the only way possible: through a genuinely free acceptance of God’s will and grace? (p. 139)
This whole book is an attempt to answer that call and vision and it deserves to be heard. The scholarship is impressive, the message is timely and the procedure relevant. I hope many more readers here in Asia will find the work as thought-provoking as I did.

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